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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a content analysis study of the dialogue in student-professor dialogue journals with a focus on professors' responses to student journal entries. Nine journals were kept by a multicultural sample of eight preservice secondary teachers and their three professors. The researchers applied Tannen's (1990) theory of symmetry in conversations to discover the extent to which the responses from professors reduced students' feelings of isolation as they progressed through the various stages of the certification program. It was found that the tone of student journals dictated professors' responses. However, the professors did not take the symmetrical role of co-learners in their conversations with students. Rather, they maintained a more distant professor-as-expert stance in their responses. The study also explored the issue of how best to handle student-professor dialogue journal reflection with a focus on individual cases. (Contains 33 references.) (GLR)

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EXPLORING THE OTHER HALF OF THE DIALOGUE: A CASE STUDY ANALYSIS OF PROFESSOR RESPONSES TO STUDENT DIALOGUE JOURNAL ENTRIES IN A MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY

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Abstract

We conducted a content analysis of the dialogue in student-professor dialogue journals with a focus on professors' responses to student journal entries.These journals were kept among a small, multicultural sample of preservice secondary teachers and their professors. We applied Tannen's (1990) theory of symmetry in conversations to discover the extent to which our responses as professors reduced students' feelings of isolation as they progressed through the various stages of our certification program. We found the tone of student journals dictated our responses. However, we did not take the symmetrical role of co-learners in our conversations with students. Rather, we maintained a more distant professor-as- expert stance in our responses. Our study explores the issue of how best to handle student-professor dialogue journal reflection with a focus on individual cases.

Conversational dialogues involve a tacit contract between speaker and listener. This communication contract assumes that a speaker will strive to be understood by the other party and that the listener will actively seek meaning and signal the other party should communication break down (Grimes, 1975).

This idealized view of conversation may not play out in dialogues involving parties at different sociocultural and hierarchical strata. Tannen (1990) questioned why some conversations floundered with two parties talking at cross-purposes. She used the term "symmetrical" to delineate dialogues that result in mutual understanding and "asymmetrical" to describe dialogues that distance one party from the other. For example, if a neophyte computer user asks a friend for assistance in figuring out how to use E-mail and the individual providing the assistance replies "just use Kermit software to log on and follow the protocol for the VAX system," mutual understanding is lost. It is lost not just because arcane language is used. The "teacher" in this instance produced an asymmetrical interchange by using insider terms to assert a position of higher status over the neophyte. If anything, conversations of this nature might dissuade a beginner from further learning and, at the very least, inhibit any future inquiries.

Thus, we have the paradoxical situation of an innate desire to develop a sense of shared experience and community through conversational dialogue that also has the potential to accomplish just the opposite, resulting in a greater sense of isolation (Tannen, 1990).

We conducted a content analysis of the dialogue in student-professor dialogue journals kept among a small, multicultural sample of preservice secondary teachers and their professors. Focusing on professor responses to student entries, we applied Tannen's (1990) theory of symmetry to discover the extent to which our responses as professors reduced students' feelings of isolation by creating a symmetrical dialogue. Previous research in dialogue journal writing in teacher education has highlighted student responses in an attempt to understand the meaning of preservice experience from the student's point of view (Staton, 1991).

Theories of Preservice Teacher Development

A number of factors interact to shape a future teacher's development. Among these factors are: (a) the influence of discipline subculture (O'Brien, 1988; Bean & Zulich, 1990); (b) the quality of preservice experience in the classroom (Cherland, 1989; Livingston & Borko, 1989; and, Richardson, 1990); and (c) opportunities for reflection on the preservice experience (Bean & Zulich, 1989; Bean & Zulich, 1990; Grimmett, Erickson, MacKinnon, & Riecken, 1990; Staton, 1990; and, Zulich & Bean, 1991). Each of these factors is filtered through a

fourth factor--the student's personal and institutional biography which includes experiences as a student for many years in the classroom (Britzman, 1987; Manna & Mischeff, 1987; Goodman, 1988; Bean & Zulich, 1990; Carter, 1990; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). Each of these factors play a role in the language and conversational style that develops in the dialogue journal exchange. Therefore, we briefly review each one.

Every discipline has its own technical vocabulary, text structure, and underlying theory base that partially defines the teaching terrain. Students often align themselves with the values of their discipline subculture (O'Brien, 1988). To the extent that students subscribe to respective discipline subcultures, their perspectives on teaching and learning vary (O'Brien, 1988; Bean & Zulich, 1990).

The quality of discipline-based field experience also influences how preservice teachers' envision their future roles. Simply expecting a preservice teacher to imitate and adopt the routines of an experienced mentor may be wildly assumptive. Livingston and Borko (1989) studied four student teachers and their cooperating teachers in mathematics. They concluded that novices may be unable to adopt through apprenticeship the routines of expert teachers because it takes years to develop the rich lesson schema of an expert. They recommended structured opportunities for student teachers to reflect on teaching.

These field-based experiences are only educative with time for reflection (Richardson, 1990; Zulich, Bean, & Herrick, in press). Research suggests that worthwhile reflection requires keen observation and reasoned analysis, as well as a view of knowledge as problematic and socially constructed (Staton, 1990; Schon, 1987; and, Zeichner & Liston, 1987). The role of reflection in learning involves much more than simply mulling over the events that occurred in a particular learning situation (Bean & Zulich, 1989). Rather, reflection is viewed as purposeful and intentional , multifaceted in the sense that thoughts as well as feelings are involved, and self-organized (Boud, Keough, & Walker, 1985). Moreover, the reference point for reflection is some event or concrete experience the learner is grappling with. Thus, field experiences offer an array of opportunities for preservice teachers' reflection.

Student-professor dialogue journals offer one route to reflective inquiry but the context of the dialogue determines whether true, open communication occurs. For example, in a previous case study, we found dialogue journal writing to be a stress release for a secondary science student teacher (Zulich & Bean, 1991). The professor responding to this student's journal was not in a supervisory role which probably reduced the asymmetrical nature of the dialogue.

Miller (1990) viewed dialogue journals as emancipatory because they place the teacher

in the role of teacher-as-researcher with knowledge seen as socially constructed and open to question. Her three-year dialogue journal project attempted to reduce the barriers to honest communication among five experienced teachers and their graduate professor. Each participant grappled with the asymmetrical conversational problems highlighted in Tannen's (1990) research. For example, Miller reported that she struggled with her role as professor and originator of the invitation to engage in this long term dialogue:

> In my concern over imposing the authority of my role and in my simultaneous struggle to believe in the authority of my own voice, I had come close to dismissing or ignoring or not seeing the active agency of these people with whom I was working. These educators were quite capable of determining and exploring the issues that they wished to investigate, and, in fact, did not look to me for approval or direction as they grappled with their discrepancies. (Miller, 1990, p. 59)

Over time, these asymmetrical barriers diminished. Perhaps the three year duration of this project allowed for greater symmetry in the dialogue as the professor and teacher roles eventually changed. Miller's study alludes to the hierarchical status relationships that can interfere with communication, but she did not explore any theoretical basis for this interference.

A dialogue journal writer's personal biography also influences the communication contract between two people. The area of preservice teacher biography has received some attention in the literature (Carter, 1990; Zeichner & Gore, 1990; Goodman, 1988; and, Britzman, 1987). These researchers argue that past experiences as a learner form a filter through which a preservice teacher develops teaching beliefs and practices. Bennett (1991) found that autobiographical differences among preservice teachers resulted in contrasting approaches to classroom teaching. She concluded that reflective journals helped preservice teachers work through the fears and problems associated with becoming a teacher.

These studies suggest that the factors of personal biography, discipline subculture, field-based experiences, and opportunities for reflection such as dialogue journal writing, influence a preservice teacher's development. However, the missing element in studies of student-professor dialogue journal communication is a theoretical description of this process that shows the dialogue journal's potential for interchange tempered by journal communication that falls short of this goal. Our study explores this contrast using Tannen's (1990) theoretical construct of symmetrical and asymmetrical conversations.

Method

Materials

The study included nine dialogue journals maintained in three distinct education courses: (a) Introduction to Education, a social foundations survey course comprised of students at the beginning stage of teacher preparation; (b) Reading/Writing in the Content Areas, a secondary methods course with observation and participation in the public schools; and (c) Seminar in Secondary Student Teaching, the seminar attached to student teaching, representing total immersion in field experience. An earlier stage of this study analyzed only student entries to investigate of student-initiated interests and concerns at different stages of teacher preparation. The present study focused on professor responses to student journals.

Subjects

In the original study, secondary students and their voluntary journals were selected for case study analysis based on their representation of predominant content majors and ethnic backgrounds in our program. Because one student was enrolled simultaneously in Introduction to Education and Content Area Reading/Writing, the nine student journals belonged to eight students. Therefore, three case studies were developed for each of the three stages of our predominantly post-baccalaureate program.

The present study expanded the original case analysis to include the three professors who responded to student journals in each of the three education courses. It is important to note that the original study never included an intent to analyze professor responses to student journal entries. Reflecting on the study's results made us realize the importance of examining the dialogue between student and professor in its entirety as communication between two participants. In essence, the present study acknowledged the role of professor respondents as subjects.

The student subjects were given pseudonyms, however the professor subjects maintained their correct names.

Procedures

We followed the qualitative research procedures employed in the original study (Zulich, Bean, & Herrick, in press), which expanded upon methods used in our previous research (Bean & Zulich, 1989; Bean & Zulich, 1990; and Zulich & Bean, 1991). Current procedures were based on content analysis of professor responses to student journal entries and constant comparison analysis for emerging patterns (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Merriam, 1988; and, Miles & Huberman, 1984). We repeatedly read all transcribed student journals and professor

responses. Focusing on professor responses, we made qualitative notes in the margins of the transcripts (Merriam, 1988). Data were unitized by recording separate and specific pieces of information on index cards which were then organized topically (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This process created a general picture of the types of comments we wrote to students. Repeated sorting of the unitized information on these cards yielded fourteen such categories. At final analysis, nine professor response categories emerged. Definitions and examples are as follows:

(a) Questions - include rhetorical or direct inquiries either of a personal nature or those based on student entries. Example: "Is this the same teacher you had for fourth grade?"

(b) Agreement - refers to those responses that specifically agree with student comments. Example: "Good way of putting it. I agree completely."

(c) Extension of Student Thoughts - encompasses those responses that continue the student's discussion, often establishing a "private curriculum" by offering additional information or suggested readings. Example: "I've been wondering when you were going to get to the questions you raise in the first paragraph. Now that they're out....you can confront them, turn them over, examine them, make adjustments..."

(d) Margin Comments - are one or two word statements usually written in the margin near the relevant part of the entry. Example: "Good start."

(e) Advice - relates to suggestions or advice offered to the student. Example: "Generally though, it's a good idea to try to stay out of the way of real violence and send for help!"

(f) Answers - refer to direct or indirect answers to student question. Example: "Yes, you should be able to do some actual teaching- especially in terms of the vocabulary final project."

(g) Encouragement - incorporates comments that either assure students about future uncertainties or encourage them to continue good work. Example: "It's difficult, if not impossible, to attend to every one of your students extensively on a personal level. Keep up the good work!"

(h) Compliments - involve affirmations of student effort or personal comments. Example: "You're pretty special."

(i) Acknowledgment - includes responses that recognize the student's specific talents,

skills, or contributions. Example: "You certainly demonstrate mature reflection when you can identify your concerns with separating ego from teaching. Many people get caught in this."

These nine categories were transferred to an analysis grid which allowed us to assign unitized information on index cards to them. Because professor responses often incorporated different types of remarks, we selected distinct, complete thoughts as units of information and assigned each unit to one of the categories. In this regard, complete thoughts mentioned in the professor responses were counted only once.

Background and Results

Our responses to student journal entries comprised the chief area of interest in the present study. In this sense we expanded the original study by exploring the other half of the dialogue. A review of the original study provides a more complete framework for looking at our responses to student entries.

Overview of the Original Study's Results

Eight conceptual categories emerged from students' journals in the original study: (a) course value (positive comments about specific strategies or concepts learned); (b) preservice teacher thoughts (uncertainty about assuming the role of the teacher); (c) professional immersion (discipline subculture membership and interest in professional issues); (d) individual development (personal characteristics that interact with course assignments and field experiences); (e) relationship to students (management and achievement issues); (f) relationship with cooperating teacher (apprenticeship role comments); (g) awareness of effective lessons and teaching (critical analysis of effective teaching); (h) stress/frustration/anxiety (concerns about the aforementioned dimensions).

The students passed through three discernible stages in their teacher preparation: (a) introductory; (b) intermediate; and, (c) immersion. These stages parallel the three sections of our program sampled in both studies: (a) Introduction to Education; (b) Content Area Reading/Writing; and, (c) Student Teaching. Student journals demonstrated very different interests and concerns at these stages.

A general description of student journal patterns across these three stages exemplifies their marked differences. Table 1 displays these changing responses as students advanced through introductory, intermediate, and immersion stages.

Insert Table 1 About Here

The introductory course was the main frame of reference for students to examine the world of education. Understandably, journal entries concentrated most on course content, as students struggled with concepts and issues of a profession that was new to them. They expressed idealistic views about their future roles, but tempered these views with typical self-doubt about their own possible contributions. At the intermediate stage, where students undertook their first foray into a practicum assignment in content area reading, student journals focused on the classroom application of specific strategies presented in the course. Practicum students wrote about lesson planning, teaching effectiveness, and their relationships with cooperating teachers. Finally, the majority of student teachers' journal entries centered on their relationships with the significant others of this immersion stage: secondary students and cooperating teachers. In part, individual student differences shaped these relationships.

We found that students' personal biographies interacted with the other dimensions that influence preservice teachers, including discipline subculture, preservice courses, and school-based practica, to help or hinder their ability to negotiate the various stages of becoming a teacher. At each stage, dialogue journals demonstrated that preservice teachers' "intuitive screens" (Goodman, 1988) and "filters" (Carter, 1990) strongly influenced their interpretation of course or practicum experiences. Because personal biography emerged as a crucial element, and because the professor comments under study were in fact responses to students' particular interests, brief descriptions of the individual students and their journals are included in the framework of examining professor responses. A brief course description and a composite of the student journal patterns within each of the education courses are presented first.

Introduction to Education Student Journals

The foundations survey course was comprised of elementary and secondary students at the introductory stage of teacher preparation, and as such, did not include a field experience component. The course guided students to engage in self analysis regarding personal motives for becoming a teacher, presented an overview of the status of the profession, and incorporated cooperative learning groups to study professional issues such as teacher unions, career ladders, and mainstreaming (Zulich, 1990).

The majority of introductory student journal entries concentrated on positive comments about the value of the course. Course appeal may have been a function of the course's structure and intent, including the shared learning experiences that may have represented a more "safe" environment than the cooperating teacher's classroom. While journal entries demonstrated high student interest in these professional issues, a number of student responses fell within the

category of individual development as students grappled with their roles as adult students and connected what they were learning about schools with personal memories and experiences. Only one student's journal indicated a fair amount of stress and all such responses related directly to individual development.

As a whole, the Introduction to Education student journals reflected the idealism that characterizes the initial stage of teacher preparation (Burden, 1990). All three students were positive about what lay ahead in field work, student teaching, and their eventual careers. Because two were non-traditional students whose significant life experiences tended to dampen novice idealism, the broader term, "introductory stage" seemed more appropriate.

Introduction to Education Professor's Responses

Most of the professor responses were distributed equally among the categories of questioning, extending student thoughts, complimenting, and acknowledging student skills and talents. An interesting pattern emerged in that these types of professor responses also were distributed fairly evenly among the three students. All three students were asked questions, were given compliments and encouragement, and received acknowledgment of skills and talents. The professor gave neither advice nor answers, to any of the students.

Jan - Introduction to Education Professor

The professor, Jan was a 38 year old Caucasian who had moved from the Midwest five years prior to accept her first assistant professorship at our university. Her extensive background in alternative education underscored a humanistic yet realistic approach to working with alienated youth, and an effort to inspire new teachers to do the same. Jan incorporated substantial self-analytical writing assignments, thus structuring the survey course from the vantage point of her English discipline subculture.

Jill - Mathematics

The youngest student in the teacher education program, Jill was a 19 year old Caucasian student who moved from the mainland to Hawaii in her freshman year of high school. Jill's journal offered a window on her personal biography as her entries included discussions about her father's teaching career and her younger brother's difficulty with algebra. She seemed to appreciate class assignments and dialogue journal writing that made her question her own motives for entering a profession she would one day share with her father. During the course of her journal writing, Jill's reflection on tutoring her brother helped her decide to switch majors and become certified in math. Her journal focused on thoughts related to course value, professional issues, and uncertainties about assuming the authoritative role of a teacher.

Professor Responses to Jill's Journal

The majority of responses were questions that indicated the professor's knowledge of Jill's personal biography, based on information provided in other course assignments. For example, in response to Jill's uncertainties about her ability to motivate students to learn math, and confessions of not living up to her own standards, Jan wrote: "Do I recall something about your own high school experience--where you were able to get by easily, just doing the minimum? It is funny how what goes around comes around. You'll have an edge on your unmotivated students, you realize."

Questions also served to extend Jill's thoughts about group learning, allowing Jan to offer an opinion: "Isn't it helpful to work with others when you're genuinely interested in learning and sharing? In other words, when competition doesn't enter the picture. You gain so much more when you appreciate others' efforts."

Marge-Biology

Unlike Jill, many of the students in our program are nontraditional in that they have spent considerable time in other careers prior to entering the teaching field. Marge was a 42 year old Caucasian student from the south who credited her childhood in a single parent family with inspiring her to teach alienated and at risk students. Considering a career as a science teacher, Marge enrolled concurrently in Introduction to Education and the Content Area Reading/Writing course. Marge's personal biography included several years in the workplace, giving her a more jaded frame of reference for viewing the teaching profession. Also, during the semester of the study, Marge began several teaching assignments: teaching G. E. D. class at the local prison, tutoring a Home/Hospital student, and participating in the Content Area Reading/Writing practicum. These assignments gave her journal a different perspective as reflected in critical self analysis of her teaching. The majority of Marge's journal entries were in the course value category with a more diverse profile of entries overall.

Professor Responses to Marge's Journal

Responses to Marge's journal fell mainly in the category of extending thoughts. Often these comments were flavored with an awareness of the student's personal biography. For example, Marge found Herbert Kohl's chapter, "On Teaching" particularly inspiring as she reflected on her own learning experiences to determine her motives for becoming a teacher. Because Marge questioned "such a ponderous system that seems to be overwhelming those that care the most," Jan remarked: "I'm glad you were perceptive enough to appreciate his direct approach. He is a no-nonsense type who speaks from years of experience fighting with the system to effectively and humanistically educate children. I recommend his book, Growing Minds: On Becoming a

Teacher. Excellent reading and quite conversational, too."

At times extending Marge's thoughts involved more encouragement than information. Offering assurance for Marge's sense of futility in working with at risk students, the professor claimed: "Yes, you can! It is important to know the barriers, but you certainly can overcome them to make a difference!"

Kainoa-Social Studies

The only male student in our study, Kainoa was a 29 year old economics major with substantial business experience. Born and raised in Hawaii, Kainoa graduated from a prestigious private school that required Hawaiian ancestry for admission. Kainoa was married to a teacher (one of our program graduates), and therefore had a clear sense of the program logistics and expectations. His journal entries centered on course value, individual development, and stress.

His personal biography, including, academic subculture, and business background flavored his interpretation of the introductory course as reflected in his journal. Kainoa's journal entries involved detailed discussions, schedules, and deadlines. The dialogue journal became his business organizer as well as a forum for appreciating the genuine cohesiveness of his study group. Unlike Jill and Marge, Kainoa used his journal to vent the stress of his personal sacrifice as a teacher in training. Kainoa's course schedule prohibited the four hour commute to his home, so he saw his wife and young daughter only on weekends.

Professor Responses to Kainoa's Journal

The first response to Kainoa's journal mirrored his businesslike format, and provided relevant but unsolicited information on program application procedures, deadlines, and advisors. It ended with a personal question that demonstrated the professor's specific connection with Kainoa's wife, a former student: "Does it help or hinder to have heard about your requirements from LiAnne?" In view of Kainoa's evident stress about time and distance from his family, Jan's remarks applauded his organizational skills and his sincere connection to his study group. She wrote, "Your group is doing very well together. These ideas are very encouraging, " and, "the group has been well organized from the start. Congratulations!"

Taken together, responses to the three introductory journals indicate Jan's attempt to personalize the curriculum for students. Given the exploratory and analytical purposes of the course, which encouraged students to examine the field of education and their reasons for entering the teaching profession, such personal remarks seem appropriate.

Content Area Reading/Writing Student Journals

This required course, common in secondary programs throughout the country (Bean & Readence, 1989; Readence, Bean, & Baldwin, 1992), emphasized guiding student learning from

text through various assessment and teaching approaches in vocabulary, comprehension, writing, and study strategies. The course introduced specific strategies such as study guides, anticipation-reaction guides, and graphic organizers that help students cope with often unfriendly textbooks. The two day practicum attached to the course provided prospective secondary teachers field-based opportunities in cooperating teachers' classrooms to practice these strategies with adolescents. Analysis of journal entries in this course indicated that as our students entered public school classrooms in their new teaching roles, they became focused on the specifics of developing effective lessons and less concerned with the more global issues of education considered in the introductory course. Often expressing appreciation for or direct interest in incorporating vocabulary strategies, students recognized the value of the reading course. At this intermediate stage of teacher preparation, students also became aware of the importance of building effective relationships with their cooperating teachers. While clearly propelled by the practicum assignment into a more advanced stage of teacher development focusing on lesson effectiveness, intermediate stage students displayed few journal comments regarding their relationships with secondary students. This focus on their own lesson design with an absence of concern for student learning is not atypical of novice teachers.

Content Area Reading/Writing Professor Responses

The majority of professor responses fell in the categories of extending student thoughts, answering questions, and acknowledging student skills and talents. In contrast to the introductory course, responses at this intermediate stage offered a more diverse profile. Although professor responses in the categories of extending thoughts and complimenting were written to all three students, the categories of answering and acknowledging skills were evident in responses to only one student.

Tom-Content Area Reading/Writing Professor

Tom was a 42 year old Caucasian full professor who graduated from a celebrated private high school in Hawaii. After teaching, conducting research, and serving as a Reading Department Graduate Coordinator at a California university, Tom returned to the Big Island to serve as Education Department Chair. A co-author of the text used in his course, Tom enjoyed high credibility among his students. His instructional orientation highlighted specific vocabulary and learning from text strategies that could be applied to any content area classroom.

Iwalani-Social Studies

Iwalani was a 38 year old political science major returning to complete her teaching certification courses after having five children and working in the hotel industry. She was Chinese, raised in the Hawaiian community. Iwalani's teaching experience included volunteer

work as a docent at a local ocean park educational center. As evidenced in the pages of her journal, Iwalani's personal biography illustrated her deep interest in group-oriented teaching strategies. Her life experiences in the Hawaiian community and her academic subculture in social studies supported the value of cooperation and group responsibility. Iwalani's practicum placement with an outstanding junior high teacher provided valuable opportunities to practice reading and writing strategies that involved small group work and her journal gave her a place to reflect on her ability to use these strategies in the classroom. The majority of her journal entries centered on how effectively she delivered lessons and employed strategies, which also indicated an appreciation for the course.

Professor Responses to Iwalani's Journal

Responses to Iwalani's journal were basically extensions of her thoughts. Unlike the personal orientation of responses to the introductory students, extensions at this intermediate stage were more instructional in nature. For example, in response to Iwalani's memories of an effective teacher who did not use the text as a "bible," the professor commented, "The teacher you describe was obviously exceptional. She knew how to use a text, how to orchestrate small group work, and, most importantly, how to capitalize on students' interest." Tom interjected a memory of his own, as he continued, "I agree that most of our teachers lectured and left us to sink or swim in independent text reading (however--I can think of a few outstanding teachers, too)."

Responding somewhat globally to Iwalani's admission of nervousness and uncertainty about her ensuing practicum teaching debut, the professor chose to offer information again: "Actually, O/P (observation-participation) is still pretty 'friendly' since you are under the wing of a mentor teacher. Most contemporary programs of teacher education reject the old sink or swim approach in favor of increasing amounts of responsibility. Teaching and becoming a teacher is viewed as a developmental process with discernible stages."

Marge-Biology

Marge was described earlier in the Introduction to Education section. She was enrolled in the introductory and the intermediate level Reading/Writing courses simultaneously. Marge's journal entries spanned most of the categories, but emphasized course value and individual development. Her journal highlighted typical preservice teacher concerns, although her personal biography gave her a different perspective of what to worry about as a future teacher. As a nontraditional, mature student, Marge's introductory journal expressed her concern about the competence of the school system as well as her own teaching ability.

In her reading course journal, Marge displayed a good deal of self-doubt and a philosophical view that was critical of the lecture mode of teaching and memorization often found

in university biology classes. Her respect for her cooperating teacher and a few situations where she "bombed" in front of his class gave her a new appreciation of the complexities of teaching. In addition, much of her anxiety about viewing herself as a teacher disappeared once she became immersed in several teaching assignments at the local prison, as a home tutor, and in the practicum experience.

Professor Responses to Marge's Journal

Of the three intermediate journals, Marge's was the only one to prompt the professor's acknowledgment of skills and answers to questions. Acknowledging Marge's new teaching role, Tom commented, "You bring a wide array of experiences to teaching--the prison work certainly provides a clear sense of how hard it is to go back and learn rudimentary basic skills." Later in the semester, he responded to a compliment about his own teaching style by sharing personal views of teaching and acknowledging her continued teaching endeavors. He wrote: "I've always enjoyed activity-based teaching--probably rooted in my own style of learning by doing coupled with reading and reflection. You are gaining an amazing array of teaching experiences. These diverse contributions should make finding a position that much easier!"

Carolyn-English

Carolyn was a 39 year old Caucasian student with an adolescent son. She was returning to complete her credential after a combined degree in French and English, and a career teaching horseback riding. Carolyn learned to relate her practicum learning experiences to her years as an equestrian instructor. This biographical filter allowed her to accept the cooperating teacher's critique about her "cool" management without becoming upset. Through her journal she determined that her detachment in difficult situations was more appropriate in the equestrian arena than in the classroom. In this sense, journal writing facilitated a useful discovery about herself that she might elect to change.

As an English major, Carolyn quickly grasped the intent of the course and demonstrated a keen interest in using the strategies presented to create effective lessons for secondary students. Her journal provided the forum for careful and methodical self-analysis of teaching.

Professor Responses to Carolyn's Journal

Carolyn's journal received terse professor responses for the three times she volunteered it for comment. Despite Tom's positive initial responses to her reflections on the text's first chapter, Carolyn's detailed examination of specific content reading strategies went virtually unattended throughout the rest of the semester. Tom's major response extended her thoughts on the concepts of content area reading: " Reading texts is considerably more complex than we usually realize. We'll be looking at psycholinguistic dimensions of texts in more detail.

Teachers really form the link to obscure concepts locked away in the sometime convoluted and unfriendly language of a textbook."

Minimal dialogue did not negate Tom's acknowledgment of Carolyn's skills. Responding to Carolyn's revelation about how her "nerves of steel" around horses translated to classroom management, he offered a supportive opinion: "I think keeping a cool head is a positive trait."

Seminar in Secondary Student Teaching Student Journals

The weekly seminar was designed as a group conference session to enable student teachers to reflect on their immersion in field experience. In addition to dialogue journals, student teachers maintained self-analytical logs which recorded personal reactions to the week's classroom occurrences. Required of all student teachers, the seminar represented the final stage in bridging the gap between university courses and practice teaching in veteran teachers' classrooms.

The majority of student teacher journal comments fell in the areas of preservice teacher thoughts, relationship to the cooperating teacher, and in particular, relationship to students. The student teaching group alone recognized the significance of interaction between instructor and learner that in essence, defines teaching. Indeed, this shift in focus from the somewhat idealistic optimism of introductory students, and the more egocentric focus on teaching (as opposed to learning) that characterized the intermediate course students, represented a real evolution in becoming a teacher. Undoubtedly, such a shift in concern toward individual student learning was brought into play by the classroom-based context of the student teaching experience.

In line with this stronger hold in the public school milieu, student teaching journals commented very little about the importance of the university seminar. While the introductory and intermediate students focused on issues and strategies presented in their respective courses, student teachers embraced the realities and complexities of actual classrooms. Not surprisingly, personal biography again played a key role in how student teachers negotiated this final stage of preservice induction to the profession.

Student Teaching Seminar Professor Responses

Professor responses fell mainly in the categories of margin comments, extending student thoughts, complimenting, and acknowledging student talents. The 19 one-line margin comments were distributed almost evenly between two of the students, which left the majority of lengthy responses for one particular student. The absence of remarks acknowledging student talents in one case is explained in the section describing professor responses to Fumiko's journal.

Johanna-Student Teaching Professor

Johanna was a 47 year old Caucasian who had moved from the Midwest 13 years prior to accept a teaching position on the Big Island. A veteran of 25 years, Johanna taught secondary English and served as an elementary school librarian before joining our department as an adjunct faculty member. Her exceptional knowledge of the scope and sequence of the K-12 curriculum enabled her to assist as well as inspire secondary student teachers in their new roles in the public schools

Fumiko-Art

Fumiko was a 22 year old local Hawaii Japanese student who graduated from our university and lived with her parents. From all indications, she approached her student teaching with reluctance. The consummate unhappy apprentice, Fumiko simply endured the student teaching experience. Indeed, her journal entries were consistently negative, but they gave her a voice for complaining (Shuy, 1988) about students, other teachers, and her own inadequacies. Her defensiveness may have been in part due to her difficulty in adjusting to an authoritative role, for at the close of her student teaching semester, Fumiko was anxious to get rid of her charges.

Fumiko was a pretty, well dressed student whose remarks reflected a poor self image and lack of confidence blamed on her youth. What accounted for her negative feelings? Perhaps it was the "sink or swim" model that dominates the student teaching experience (Britzman, 1987).

Professor Responses to Fumiko's Journal

The majority of professor responses were margin comments that served as extensions of thoughts expressed in Fumiko's journal. From the beginning, Fumiko's journal displayed negativism and fear. Responding to Fumiko's perceived problem of an unfriendly teacher, Johanna talked about "the challenge of working in the schools" in a positive sense of "maintaining a good working relationship with as many people as possible." Throughout the journal, an interesting pattern emerged as the professor reacted to Fumiko's negativity. Johanna's comments became shorter as Fumiko complained: "My period 4 class is absolutely pitiful," and, "period 2 is also hell." Toward the end of the journal dialogue, Johanna defended herself in an effort to return to a positive chord: "Gee, I didn't mean to strike such a nerve here! Just wanted to raise the issue! One of the areas you need to be aware of in public schools is the tremendous temptation to personalize, set up we-they or me-they situations... The trick is to be cool, stand back and analyze, and very carefully determine which issues warrant your attention--i.e., pick your battles carefully--some things are just not worth it."

Leilani- Social Studies

Leilani was a 24 year old Hawaiian student who graduated in psychology from our university. She was married and had a young daughter. In contrast to Fumiko, Leilani demonstrated enormous empathy with her students. Leilani's personal biography greatly influenced her perception of the student teaching role. Perhaps because of her major in psychology, and her own struggles as a pregnant teenager, Leilani reached out to students with a strong sense of concern for their success. Her Hawaiian cultural value of ohana (family) played an important role in her attachment to her students and her reluctance to leave them at the end of the semester. During the course of her journal writing, Leilani demonstrated keen awareness of the reciprocal nature of teaching. She commented frequently on the energy she received from her students and used these "teaching highs" to cope with many of the stresses that caused Fumiko to dislike the whole experience.

Her split assignment in two cooperating teachers' classrooms, unique to our program, required a certain amount of confidence. Leilani responded very positively to the unusual field placement, and her journal entries reflected self-assurance as well as a willingness to experience both teachers' different styles of teaching and supervision.

Professor Responses to Leilani's Journal

Leilani's journal included the most diverse pattern of professor responses, divided somewhat equally between acknowledgment, compliments, extension of thoughts, and encouragement. Of the three journals, Leilani's journal represented the best real dialogue in that it resembled an ongoing conversation. Leilani's initial entry expressed concern about a situation with a student and her cooperating teacher, to which Johanna responded, "Leilani, let me know if you resolved this!" Leilani's next entry began, "It's resolved" and gave an explanation. Throughout the semester, Johanna addressed a number of Leilani's concerns from struggling to learn the content she was teaching to dealing with emotions after a 2:00 a.m. phone call from a distraught student. Johanna advised, "I've been wondering when you were going to get to the personal questions you raise in the first paragraph of your journal...my personal advice is to back off a little sometimes in order to survive in teaching; your talent is sorely needed."

Glenda-English

Glenda was a 25 year old Japanese/Caucasian student raised on the East Coast. As a child, she spent summers in Hawaii with her surgeon father. Graduating in English from a prestigious East Coast college, Glenda returned to the Big Island specifically to attend our teacher education program. She admitted to having little desire to stay in the slow moving pace of our small island town. In fact, before entering student teaching, Glenda expressed deep immersion in her

discipline subculture to the point of considering entry in a doctoral program. Yet during her student teaching, she set high expectations for her students and developed a positive relationship with them and her cooperating teacher.

Glenda's own view of the powerful influence of personal biography emerged in her journal as she reflected on previously learned course theory in relationship to actual classroom discipline and management. She came to the conclusion that the ability to handle difficult situations simply depends on personal style. This revelation was different from Carolyn's awareness of her "cool" nature in such situations, as prompted by her cooperating teacher's remarks. In contrast, Glenda used her journal to make the connection between theory and practice, and then contemplated the personal justifications for why and how teachers respond to classroom occurrences. Much like Leilani, she demonstrated keen interest in her students' success, and exchanged energy with her students as they found excitement in literature. Glenda's unique ability to bridge the tremendous distance between her childhood experiences on the Big Island and her ivy league college education, as well as her ability to relate complex literary topics to local students, made her one of the outstanding students in our program.

Professor's Responses to Glenda's Journal

The vast majority of responses were one-line comments written in the margins of Glenda's journal. From the beginning Glenda's journal reflected a high level of thinking about her student teaching experience. Her exceptional ability to analyze and reflect on her experiences apparently led Johanna to make one-line comments in the midst of Glenda's journal entries. When Glenda shared her fear that the optimism she felt for her students might not last, Johanna responded, "What's with the gloom? Must we really pay for our pleasure?" Again, when Glenda talked about dedication to teaching, Johanna's responses were very brief: "Absolutely--excellently put! I agree 100%." Perhaps the key response was an indication of Johanna's confidence in Glenda as the discussion of dedication continued: "You are describing yourself, aren't you?"

Discussion

Taken together our responses to student entries create a pattern that underscores an important purpose of dialogue journal writing. Simply, the language and content of the journals are determined by the student. Repeatedly, the tone of student journals seemed to dictate our responses. The most striking examples occurred during the immersion stage of student teaching. Despite minor attempts to help Fumiko view her experiences more positively, Johanna's increasingly shorter responses indicate a sense of futility or disinterest. Perhaps Johanna was tiring of the negativism.

The messages of Fumiko's journal were insecurity, defensiveness, and negativity. In contrast, Glenda's journal resounded with optimism and a high degree of nonjudgmental self-analysis. Although the contrast in their journals is glaring, Fumiko and Glenda wrote journals that could be viewed as closed systems. Their journals did not really need outside commentary. Hence, the one-line comments from Johanna may have been appropriate responses.

Interestingly, Leilani's was the only journal that did not prompt such one-line comments. Her journal invited Johanna to join the dialogue through direct questions that not only elicited opinion and counsel but also gave focus to responses. Leilani's personal biography strongly influenced such invitation and separated her journal from those of her two counterparts.

Given that our responses were in large measure shaped by student entries including what they wrote and how much they as personalities were willing to share, the type of responses also were indicative of our own personal biographies and the nature of the courses we taught. The interaction of biography and course may be seen most clearly in the introductory stage journals.

Tannen (1990) restated the obvious in a comment on individuality: "In innumerable ways, every person is utterly unlike anyone else--including anyone else from many of the same categories" (p. 16). In our study, Tannen's reminder may apply more to an analysis of responses to introductory student journals than to the professor's recognition of each student's uniqueness. Despite the very different personal biographies of the three introductory students (Jill, Marge, and Kainoa), Jan's remarks were extremely consistent and presented a paradoxical pattern. Although Jan often personalized responses by referring to the student's family members or their individual histories, the tone and nature of her responses were repeatedly the same. In addition, the analysis yielded identical numbers of responses in the major categories of extending student thought, compliments, and acknowledging student contributions. In some ways such consistency denies the individuality of each student. Perhaps more accurately, the consistent encouraging responses tell something about the professor's personal biography. Indeed, Jan's interpretation of the introductory course was influenced by her alternative education background which emphasized an affective orientation to teaching. Her own preservice experiences were under the direction of a charismatic professor who inspired students to become active change agents in the profession. Clearly, part of what Jan wrote had to do with what she had experienced (Tannen, 1990).

Student entries raised a variety of issues that in effect allowed us to speak from our own personal biographies and establish a private curriculum with each student (Zulich, Bean, & Herrick, in press). As in any tutorial situation, time constraints represent one of several logistical factors that affect dialogue journals between students and their professors. How these

logistics affect the quantity and quality of professor responses in our study is most clearly depicted at the intermediate stage.

While the number of ongoing journal conversations in a given course might limit the length of professor's remarks, the number of times a student volunteers his or her journal presents a different problem. As evidenced in the exchanges between Carolyn and Tom, voluntary and minimal journal submission created an interrupted dialogue that at times left Carolyn writing in a conversational vacuum. Because he was not able to respond regularly to Carolyn's journal, Tom's situation was much like viewing the vacation slides of a distant relative. Commentary on his own struggles or discussions of "having been there" might have been appropriate interjections but Carolyn's journal did not invite his response.

Beyond the degree to which our responses were shaped by our students' entries, our own personal and institutional biographies played a significant role in creating dialogues that were largely asymmetrical (Tannen, 1990). Analysis indicates that we did not take the role of co-learners. Rather, the frequency counts in Table 1 show that we responded to students by extending their thoughts, complimenting them, and acknowledging their skills and talents. We adopted a professorial position on the high ground where we could remain aloof, offering an occasional aphorism or terse comment. In essence, we did little to reveal our own struggle to become teachers. We spoke from the position of university experts in our respective courses, shielded from admitting to Fumiko and others that we did not have easy answers to their problems.

In all likelihood, our inexperienced preservice students were comfortable seeking help and advice, and as Tannen's (1990) theory explains, they may have felt honor-bound to accept our involvement. Their roles as students have been clearly defined throughout their individual and institutional histories. It appears, however, that our roles as professors might be more negotiable.

In our work, Tannen's construct of symmetrical and asymmetrical conversations seems particularly appropriate. Although students' journal entries influenced our responses, we now see that we came to the dialogue journal writing process with a schema for responding. Namely, we were the professors in control of course content. We had knowledge about and experience in the areas that challenged our students. While our communication may not have been at cross purposes, the majority of our exchanges were characterized by unequal status among our professor and student roles.

Lest too dismal a picture remains, it is important to note that dialogue journal writing represents only one means of communication in a small teacher education program like ours.

The individual conversations before and after class, phone calls, classroom visitations, varied reflective activities, and even unplanned social occasions at the beach or soccer field represent significant opportunities for true and open communication.

This case study has convinced us to change our patterns of responding with a conscious awareness that we can be co-learners as we allow students to listen to their own voices. As a result, our responses in recent journals have become more frequent, extensive, and conversational. We actively seek to overcome the pitfalls of asymmetrical dialogue in the tone, content, and even mode of our responses. For example, Tom now writes back to students on a word processor, greatly increasing the legibility and flow of the dialogue. He discusses his own learning and research, visits to schools, lessons that went well or awry, and includes personal anecdotes. Perhaps as a result of his different approach, more students are volunteering their journals and commenting that they find this "private curriculum" a humanizing and important element in our program.

At the heart of the issue of symmetrical and asymmetrical dialogues is the realization that something seemingly as simple as carrying on a dialogue journal with students is fraught with pitfalls. The use of dialogue journals should not be undertaken lightly. Rather, we need a clear sense of the complexity of human communication and the desire to expand our traditional professor-student roles to function as co-learners.

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TABLE 1
PROFESSORS' RESPONSES TO STUDENT JOURNAL ENTRIES

	Questions	Agreement	Extension of Student Thought	Margin Comments	Advice	Answers	Encouragement	Compliments	Acknowledgement
JILL	4	2	3	0	0	0	3	3	3
MARGE	1	1	3	0	0	0	3	2	2
KAINOA	2	0	2	1	0	0	1	3	3
INTRODUCTORY TOTAL	7	3	8	1	0	0	7	8	8
IWALANI	0	1	4	1	1	0	0	2	0
MARGE	0	0	4	1	0	4	0	1	3
CAROLYN	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
INTERMEDIATE TOTAL	0	0	9	2	2	4	0	3	5
FUMIKO	0	0	7	9	2	1	1	2	0
LEILANI	0	1	5	0	2	3	4	5	7
GLENDA	3	1	1	10	0	1	0	2	2
IMMERSION TOTAL	3	2	13	19	4	5	5	9	9